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"Light-Line Phonography" and "Gregg Shorthand." Some Bibliographical Notes.

BY JOHN ROBERT GREGG.

THE first publication of "Light-Line Phonography" was "The Phonetic Handwriting," published in Liverpool on May 28, 1888. The order to the printer was for five hundred copies, but probably not quite that many were delivered in salable condition. As stated in the reproduction of this First Edition, prepared for presentation to those who attended the Silver Jubilee convention held in Chicago in 1913, "Of the original book only seven copies are known to be extant, of which number one is in the British Museum, another in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and a third in the possession of the author." This leaves but four copies in the hands of private owners. (It has occurred to me recently that possibly copies may have been sent to the libraries at Cambridge, Edinburgh, and Dublin, as well as to Oxford).

Copies of the first edition of "The Reporters Handbook," issued in June, 1888, are also extremely rare; it is my impression that it is almost as difficult to find copies of the first edition of that book as it is of "The Phonetic Handwriting." In fact, copies of any of the first four editions of either of these books would be valuable acquisitions to any shorthand collection, and they will undoubtedly appreciate in value as time goes on.

There is a still rarer presentation of the system, which I do not think is to be found outside the British Museum, the Bodleian Library* (in which copies of it were deposited for copyright purposes) and possibly the libraries at Cambridge, Edinburgh, and Dublin. This is a one-sheet presentation of "Light-Line Phonography," prepared for copyright protection before publication in book form, which was registered at Stationers' Hall, London, on March 29, 1888. It consisted of a sheet 10 1-2 x 8 1-2 inches, containing the alphabet with explanatory "Notes," the "Blended Consonants," and two specimens of the writing, one in the "Phonetic Handwriting" and the other in "The Reporting Style." The key to both the specimens reads: "The necessity of the age is a simple, legible, and rapid phonetic handwriting." The shorthand outlines were filled in with pen and ink. Among some old papers, I discovered two or three copies of this sheet, but I do not

* See note in No. 6, Vol. II, p. 28, (April, 1915).

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
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know of any other copies except those in the libraries already mentioned.

The first American edition of "Gregg's Shorthand" (later called "Gregg Shorthand") was also in two parts, but the titles of the two pamphlets (in which form the system was presented from its publication in 1888 until 1897) were changed to "Part One: The Elements," and "Part Two: The Reporting Style." These books or pamphlets were printed from photo-engraved plates instead of by lithography, the method by which the English editions were produced. The first American Edition of "Part One: The Elements" was published in Boston on October 14, 1893, and the first American Edition of "Part Two: The Reporting Style," on December 21, 1893. In 1896 I went to Chicago and the books were printed in that city for nearly twenty years.

The first complete presentation of the system in *one* book—the Manual—was published in Chicago on April 16, 1897. For some years thereafter each new printing of the Manual was called an "edition," and this was continued until the forty-second edition (or printing) was reached when the numbering of editions was discontinued.

Probably sometime an enthusiastic shorthand collector will start on a quest for a complete set of these forty-two editions. If such a collection is ever completed, it will require a close comparison and scrutiny of every page to determine what changes, if any, were made in any of the plates at the time of printing.

In the past few years, on account of the very large quantities needed—each printing running into several hundred thousand copies—it has been found more economical to print in both Chicago and New York from duplicate plates, as the saving in freight effected by so doing offset the very slight gain which could be possibly secured by placing the order at one point. This applies to the Manual, to Speed Studies and to a few other books. I mention this because it will account for slight differences that may appear in the binding, and even in the plates, of what appear to be identical editions issued at the same time, which would be puzzling to collectors if no explanation were made. In recent years, too, the editions of the books used in Great Britain are printed in London, and there are many differences in the plates.

A book which I believe to be somewhat rare is the first edition of "Gregg's Shorthand Phrase Book." This book was produced by a combination of typewriting and shorthand; that is, it was written on the typewriter with a black record ribbon, the outlines filled in, and the pages photo-engraved. The Preface was dated "August, 1899" but probably it was not issued until shortly before the fire which destroyed my offices in Chicago in January, 1900. The plates and practically all of the copies on hand at that time were lost in the fire, and the book was not reprinted. It is my impression that comparatively few copies of this book were disposed of before the fire occurred. It was bound in cloth, title in gold, 32 pages, page size 7 x 5 inches.

Another book which I think is somewhat rare, as only one small edition was issued, is "Gregg's Shorthand Reading Book, No. 1,"

which was published October 6, 1900.

When I decided to come to the United States, I arranged with a writer of the system, Mr. William J. Burrows, of Chicago, to have printed and copyrighted a Synopsis of the revised system to be printed and copyrighted simultaneously with a similar Synopsis in Liverpool. The Synopsis printed and published by Mr. Burrows was registered at Washington on July 17, 1893. After copyrighting it as "proprietor," Mr. Burrows executed a legal transfer of it to me, which was registered on September 21, 1893. Mr. Burrows sold a few copies of the "Synopsis" to friends in Chicago, while I sold a few copies to friends in Liverpool. It is somewhat curious that no allusion has been made to this "Synopsis" by the many shorthand collectors who are so alert to secure rarities. This "Synopsis of Gregg's Shorthand" consisted of four printed pages (7 x 5) with outlines filled in with pen and ink.

The English editions of "Gregg's Shorthand": "Part One—The Elements" and "Part Two--The Reporting Style", were published in 1893 at Newcastle-on-Tyne simultaneously with the American edition of the revised system. These books or pamphlets were produced by lithography, the shorthand forms being written by Mr. A. S. Humphrys (deceased) who then acted as my agent. Although Mr. Humphrys had a thorough knowledge of the system, he was a very clumsy writer, and the outlines in these books are not at all artistic—to put it mildly. I believe that copies of these books are exceedingly rare.

In 1901 (Preface dated "Chicago, April, 1901") another edition of both books, printed from photo-engraved plates made in Chicago, was published by Mr. S. G. Field, Stratford-on-Avon, who succeeded Mr. Humphrys as my agent. I think that copies of this edition are more readily obtainable than of the previous one.

Among the publications in the system that are likely to be overlooked and are certainly rare—and therefore especially interesting to collectors—are some little books published in the system by Mr. Fred T. Tyndall (deceased) of the Edinburgh School of Shorthand and Typewriting, Edinburgh, Scotland. In order to furnish his students with practice material after I left England, Mr. Tyndall published two books in shorthand, "Aesop's Fables translated into Gregg's Shorthand" (twenty-six pages and cover) which ran through at least two editions, and "Gulliver's Travels translated into Gregg's Shorthand" (twenty-four pages and cover). The books were produced by lithography, and one of the things that lends interest to them is the peculiar and distinctive style in which the shorthand is written.

I need not go into detail about the later books as they are so well known.

MAGAZINES.

The first periodical in the system, strange to say, was issued in Brisbane, Australia, in April, 1889. It was called *The Queensland Light-Line Phonetic Journal*, and I believe three or four numbers were published. With the exception of the title and captions to the articles, it was entirely in shorthand and was pro-

duced by the cyclostyle or some similar apparatus. The editor and publisher was Mr. Philip C. Baines, who was one of my first students in the system in Liverpool, and who took many hundreds of our books with him when he went to Brisbane, where he established "The Light-Line Phonography Institute." Mr. Baines' health failed and he went "up country" to lead an outdoor life, and I did not hear of him again for twenty-five years. Then one day he read a letter in a Sydney weekly paper from a Mr. Scanlan, a school principal, advocating an American system called "Gregg Shorthand." He wrote to Mr. Scanlan, stating that many years before he had learned a system called "Light-Line Phonography" from a man named Gregg, and he wondered if by any possibility it could be the same system. Mr. Scanlan answered him giving the information and address. Mr. Baines wrote me, and as a result, he resumed work where he had left off a quarter of a century before.

In the *Gregg Writer* for August, 1915, we reproduced part of the first page of the first number of the "Queensland Phonetic Journal." Mr. Baines did not retain any copies, and I have only the one number, which is in a very dilapidated condition.

The next periodical was *The Light-Line Magazine*, "A monthly Journal devoted to the interests of Light-Line Phonography," edited and published by Mr. G. Ridsdale Blake, Exeter, England. The first number consisted of twelve pages, regular magazine size, without a cover and entirely in shorthand, but the later numbers, which consisted of sixteen pages and cover, were partly in type and partly in lithographed shorthand. The first number was for May, 1892, and the last number (No. 9) was for January, 1893.

My first magazine was *The Light-Liner*, the first number of which was published in Liverpool in February, 1893. It consisted of sixteen pages and cover, eight pages in type and eight pages in lithographed shorthand. I wrote the shorthand transfers for the first seven numbers—the last being those for the August number, as I sailed for Boston on August 9, 1893. For some reason, the stock of the June number was exhausted, or the lithographic stone was destroyed, and it was necessary to reprint that issue. The shorthand transfers for the reprint were written by Mr. Humphrys. I mention this as the fact that there is such a great difference in the shorthand of two copies of the same number of the magazine might be puzzling to collectors.

After my departure for America, *The Light-Liner* was conducted by Mr. A. S. Humphrys, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, with the assistance of other writers and teachers. The shorthand transfers for the September number were written by Mr. Humphrys, those for the October and November numbers by Mr. F. H. Spragg (my first student in the system), those for the December and January by Mr. Humphrys and those for February by Mr. Spragg. The last number was for February, 1894 (Vol. 2. No. 1). In May, 1896, I resumed publication of *The Light-Liner* in Chicago and continued it until December, 1896—eight numbers.

In November, 1897, Mr. Fred T. Tyndall, (deceased), principal of the Edinburgh School of Shorthand, Edinburgh, Scotland, on his own initiative issued *The Light-Liner*—"Vol. III. No. 1 (New

Series)." The first two issues consisted of sixteen pages, lithographed in longhand and shorthand, with a cover. From the third issue, January, 1898, it was partly letterpress and partly lithographed shorthand. With the April, 1898 issue, the title was changed, at my request, to *Tyndall's Monthly and Typist*; with the July, 1898 issue, it became *Tyndall's Monthly Advertiser*; with the October, 1898 issue, the word "Advetiser" was dropped and it was called *Tyndall's Monthly*. The last copy I have is that for January. 1899—Vol. IV. No. 3, and possibly this is the last number published.

Strenuous efforts have been made by several collectors, both in England and in this country, to secure complete files of either the English edition or the American edition of *The Light-Liner* without success. I know of only one complete file of *both*—the one in my possession. Mr. Joseph Jakeman, of Liverpool, and Mr. Forrest Clark, however, have almost succeeded in securing complete sets.

The first number of *The Gregg Writer* made its appearance in April, 1889. It was edited and published by Mr. W. E. Van Wert, who was then teaching the system in Plainfield, N. J. Before taking up the study of shorthand, Mr. Van Wert had been a newspaper reporter and this prompted him to start a periodical devoted to the system. The "Magazine" consisted of eight large pages (size 11 x 15 inches) without cover, and with two of the pages devoted to advertising. There were a few small shorthand illustrations in some issues. Five numbers were published in this form. With the October, 1899 issue (Vol. II, No. 1) the *Gregg Writer* assumed regular magazine size, and consisted of sixteen pages with a cover. The issue for February-March (a double number) was published at Wheeling, West Virginia, to which city Mr. Van Wert had gone as teacher of shorthand. With the August, 1900 (Vol. II. No. 11) it was announced that it was edited and published by W. E. Van Wert and W. B. Elliott—the latter being the proprietor of the school in which Mr. Van Wert was teaching. At the end of the year I took over the magazine, and since the January, 1901 issue (Vol. III. No. 4) it has been edited by me. It is now in its twenty-fourth volume and has a circulation of more than 75,000 copies a month, which I believe is by far the largest circulation ever attained by a shorthand magazine.

I think I have the only complete files of *The Gregg Writer*. Copies of the first volume (the five numbers I described) were in such a very cheap and clumsy form and the circulation so small that they soon disappeared. It is unlikely that anyone will be able to secure a complete set of that volume.

A great deal of effort has been put forth by many enthusiastic writers and teachers as well as collectors to secure copies of the first three volumes of the magazine, but without success.

I realize that these notes are very incomplete. The truth is that I have been more interested in adding to my collection—when I have had any leisure to give to it—the works of others. Then, perhaps, being closer to my own publications, I have had a hazy idea I could easily make up a complete file of them at any time—

an idea which I now find to be wholly erroneous. If any of the members of the Willis-Byrom Club desire information about any particular publication in the system, I shall be glad to furnish it, if it is possible to do so.

Secretary's Announcements.

On January 17 the members of the Club residing in New York and vicinity held a meeting in the office of the Secretary. Those in attendance were: Messrs. Heffley, Bridge, Healey. Beygrau, Gregg. A report of the meeting was sent to each member with recommendations made by unanimous vote of those present at the meeting. These recommendations were:

1. Remission of all dues to January 1, 1922.

2. That number of Club publications be increased to 100, and that any copies remaining on hand, over and above the copies sent to members and to libraries, as specified in the Constitution, should be retained by the Librarian of the Club and disposed of only upon the authority of the Executive Committee.

3. That the CLUB BULLETIN should be edited and published by the Secretary of the Club.

All these recommendations were approved by the members who voted, and the following members were elected, there being no adverse vote to either:

James William Taylor, London; and Rupert P. SoRelle, New York City. Mr. Horace G. Healey was elected Treasurer.

The suggestion that members be elected from non-English-speaking countries was vigorously disapproved by several members on these grounds:

1. That it was contrary to the original purpose of the founder of the Club.

2. That, as the membership was rigidly restricted by the original Constitution to twenty-five, the election of members from non-English-speaking countries would tend to still further limit the activities of the Club.

3. That even election to Honorary Membership might lead to rivalry and embarrasment, particularly in the case of German and French shorthand authors, bibliographers and collectors.

The election of foreign members is, therefore, held in abeyance until the entire membership has an opportunity of considering the matter.

Several of the members expressed their warm appreciation of Mr. Strachan's services in conducting the BULLETIN.

The Secretary has pleasure in reporting that the proofs of the work on "John Willis" have been sent to the author, Mr. A. T. Wright.

Mr. Gregg will sail for England at the end of April, and hopes to have a conference with the British members of the Club during the summer.